

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Tusla Identifier: TU2015RN035

Name of Service: Little Rascals Day Care

Address of Service: Circular Road, Roscommon, Co. Roscommon

Eircode: F42 XV57

Name of Registered Provider: Catherine Mullaney

Service type: Full Day

Date of Inspection: 26/06/2025

No of pre-school children:	AM	57	PM	38
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate: Early Years Inspectorate,
TUSLA Child & Family Agency,
Markievicz House,
Barrack St,
Sligo,
F91 XC84

Inspection undertaken by: L Costello and K Folan

Title: Early Years Inspectors

Authority to Inspect

The Tusla Early Years Inspectorate carries out inspections of Early Years Services under Section 58(J) of the Child Care Act 1991 (as inserted by Section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013).

Conditions if applicable Not Applicable

Description of service

This full day care is in the town of Roscommon. The pre-school caters for children from 1 to 6 years of age. The service also provides an afterschool programme for school aged children. The service is registered to operate from 7:30hrs to 18:30hrs, from Monday to Friday. The premises is in a detached building, with four playrooms. There is a kitchen where children's meals are prepared. There are outdoor play areas to the front and rear of the premises for children's play and exploration. A carpark is provided to the front of the facility for staff parking and the safe drop-off and collection of children, by parents and guardians.

Staffing

The registered provider works in the service. There are 15 staff including the registered provider. Twelve staff work directly with the preschool children. There is a designated chef who solely works in the service kitchen and an administrator working in the office.

Methodology

Tusla's Early Years Inspectorate is the independent statutory regulator of early years services in Ireland. The Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 define the duty of a registered provider to ensure the safety and well-being of children and to comply with these regulations. This Act also gives Tusla the authority to assess compliance with the regulations. The purpose of regulation in relation to early years services is to ensure that the care, safety, and well-being of children attending such services is upheld. Inspections of early years services are planned based on the following:

- Previous inspection history
- Any information received in relation to the service

The findings on inspection are based on:

- Information obtained through examination of documentation
- Direct observation
- Discussion with relevant staff

This inspection was unannounced and focused on the area of governance/ health, welfare and development of child and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 10, 11, 19, 23, 25 and 28. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulation within this report.

Inspection findings are documented in the inspection report which is first issued in draft format to the service with an opportunity to respond to any findings. Where statutory requirements are identified as not being met, the registered provider must demonstrate how they have rectified the non-compliance and will prevent any non-compliance from re occurring. The Corrective Action and Preventive Action plan (CAPA) will be used to inform decisions about compliance with regulatory requirements. Where the registered provider fails to meet the statutory requirements an escalation process may be commenced.

The inspectorate reserves the right to edit responses received for reasons including clarity, completeness and compliance with administrative and legal processes.

The contents of the report are compiled by the inspectorate body.

Acknowledgments

The inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider/ person in charge, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that-

- (a) the service has a designated person in charge and a named person who is able to deputise as required,
- (b) at all times during the period when the pre-school service is being carried on, the designated person in charge or the named person referred to in subparagraph (a) is on the premises, and

(2) A registered provider shall ensure that each employee, unpaid worker and contractor is suitable and competent taking into consideration the nature of the needs of children, including by-

- (a) consideration of references from the person's past employers, if any, and in particular the most recent employer, if any,
- (b) consideration of references from reputable sources in the case of a person who has no past employers,
- (c) consideration of the vetting disclosure received from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána in accordance with the Act of 2012 in respect of the person, and
- (d) ensuring, insofar as is practicable, that where a person has lived in a state other than the State for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months, he or she provides police vetting from the police authorities in that state.

(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(4) A registered provider shall ensure that, without prejudice to the generality of paragraph (2) and subject to paragraphs (5) and (6), each employee working directly with children attending the service holds at least a major award in Early childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

Compliance Information

(1) (a) (b)

There was a person in charge and a person available to deputise as required. The person in charge and deputy person in charge were available throughout the inspection.

(2) (a) (b)

On the day of inspection, the person in charge confirmed that there were 15 named adults who worked in the service. A review of records demonstrated that the vetting documentation for 13 adults had been reviewed during a previous inspection and found to be compliant. Recruitment records of the newly recruited adults were reviewed, and the following was available:

Four written and verified past employer references.

(c)

Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all 15 adults. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d)

International police vetting was not required as the adults had not resided outside the state for a period of six months or more as an adult.

(3) The vetting procedures had been carried out prior to an adult having access to a preschool child.

(4) Two adults had attained major awards in Early childhood care and education at level 5 or above on the national framework of qualifications, or qualifications deemed by the Department of Children, Disability and Equality (DCDE) to meet the regulatory requirement.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 10 - Policies, procedures etc. of pre-school service

A registered provider of a pre-school service shall ensure that the written policies, procedures and statements specified in Schedule 5 are in place for the service.

Compliance Information

The following policies and procedures were reviewed and found to be compliant:

(c) Administration of medication

(e) Manging behaviour

(j) Accidents and incidents

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 11 - Staffing levels

(1) Subject to this Regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that there is at all times an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service.

(2) Subject to paragraphs (4) and (5), a registered provider of a full day care service or a part-time day care service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 1 of Schedule 6 opposite a particular reference number specified in column (1) of that Part in respect of the age range of the children specified in column (2) thereof at that reference number is satisfied.

(8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-

(a) a registered provider of a pre-school service other than a child-minding service or a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that there are at least 2 adults on the premises at all times,

Compliance Information

(1) There were 9 adults working directly with 57 children on the inspectors' unannounced arrival to the service. A review of a sample of attendance showed that an adequate number of adults worked directly with the children during service hours of operation.

(2) The minimum adult to child ratios were provided on the morning of the unannounced inspection in accordance with the required ratios considering the ages of the children and the length of time each child spent in the service as outlined below:

- Cubs Room: Two adults cared for 10 children aged between one and three years.
- Ladybird Room: Two adults cared for 17 children aged between 2.6 and 4 years of age.
- Tiger Room: Two adults cared for 19 children aged between 3 and 5 years of age.
- Monkey Room: Two adults cared for 11 children aged between 2.8 years and 5 years of age.

(8) (a) A review of rosters demonstrated that two adults are always on the premises.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 19 - Health, welfare and development of child

(1) A registered provider shall, in providing a pre-school service, ensure that-

(a) each child's learning, development and well-being is facilitated within the daily life of the pre-school service through the provision of the appropriate activities, interaction, materials and equipment, having regard to the age and stage of development of the child, and

(1) A registered provider shall, in providing a pre-school service, ensure that-

(b) appropriate and suitable care practices are in place in the pre-school service, having regard to the number of children attending the service and the nature of their needs.

Compliance Information

(1) (a)

- The 'Cubs Room' is decorated with age-appropriate materials and artwork to suit the young children availing of this space. Soft matting and open floor space allows the children ample space to explore and develop, crawling or walking. Wall sensory puzzles are positioned at the child's eye level, to stimulate the senses. Low level open shelving is stocked with building blocks, musical toys, shape sorters, and age-appropriate toys to develop fine and gross motor skills. A home corner with kitchen equipped with resources to stimulate imagination.
- Personal profiles are in place for each child to ensure continuity and ease of transition into the service. Personal likes and dislikes are documented to ensure all staff supporting the young children are aware of same.
- The 'Ladybirds room' caters for an older group of children and is equipped with a wide range of resources to support their development. Open shelving equipped with sensory boxes, jigsaws', magnets and suckers enable fine motor skill development. Small world animals, dinosaurs and farm animals support creativity and learning. Building blocks and construction trucks aid imagination as well as home corners and dress up. A library equipped with a variety of books support language development. There is evidence of the child's learning and creativity displayed on the walls of the room with pictures of artwork displayed.
- In the "Monkey" room, the children bring in snack from home which is stored in the refrigerator in the care room. The room had child sized tables and chairs and a rest area. Boxes of materials are available

on low level shelves and were easily accessed by the children. The boxes contained items such as plastic bricks, train sets, vehicles, dolls and threading beads and puzzles for fine motor development. On the morning of the inspection, the children had made chocolate buns and were planning for their graduation ceremony the following day.

- In the “Tiger” room, the walls were decorated with the children’s artwork that had been completed throughout the year. In addition to pictures of each child’s family displayed on the walls, the service had a poster of flags from each family’s country of origin to represent the diversity of the children attending. The children were very familiar with the routine of the service, each child had a job to develop independence skills, such as setting the table at mealtimes, gathering up the books, folding the blankets after the rest period, and carrying the stackable beds back to the storage area. The room had a well-equipped home corner area, and items for imaginary play such as dinosaurs, vehicles and dress up items. There were puzzles and drawing boards to develop fine motor skills, and construction toys such as wooden blocks and plastic bricks for open ended play.
- The outdoor area to the front of the building contained a climbing frame with a slide on a safe fall surface. A square shaped balance beam and ride on toys were available to the children allowing them to develop gross motor skills. On the large, open grass area, open ended materials were available for the children to engage in imaginary play, with some children building items with large blocks.
- An additional outdoor area was available at the back of the building. The area was divided into two to allow separate groups to use the space at the same time. An artificial grass covering was present on both areas. One part of outdoor area was partially covered allowing all year-round access to the outdoors. The outdoor area contained a sand tray, a climbing frame, planter boxes and a seating area.

(1) (b)

- Support plans are in place to ensure all children are supported to develop independence skills. Specialized equipment was available for those children who are prescribed them and staff members were observed to take time and promote independence rather than completing tasks for the preschool child.
- Mealtimes were observed to be a positive experience for the preschool child where independence is promoted. Young children were seated in highchairs and were prompted to feed independently; support was offered when required. In the older children’s room, age-appropriate crockery and utensils were provided. Staff members sat alongside children, supervising and giving support if required.
- The main meal on the day provided by the service was cottage pie with vegetables. Extra portions were available, and alternatives were provided where children did not eat their dinner.

- Nappy changing was observed to be an opportunity for one-to-one engagement with the child, where adults were observed to converse and interact while following the service policy. Nappy changing was structured at various times throughout the day and also responsive to the needs of the children.
- Sleep time in the service was structured with a rest time provided after lunch. The younger children had a designated sleep room with standard cots for those under two and stackable floor beds for children over two years of age. Sleep was supervised by the presence of staff members and records were maintained every ten minutes. The older children were provided with rest time after lunch; stackable beds were laid out and rooms darkened. Those children who chose not to sleep were provided with books and encouraged to rest.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 23 - Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child

A registered provider shall ensure that all reasonable measures are taken to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of a pre-school child attending the service and that the environment of the service is safe.

Compliance Information

General Safety:

- The main entrance into the service was found to be secured upon the inspectors unannounced arrival to the service, which prevented persons entering unauthorised and children from leaving the building unsupervised.
- All cleaning products in the care rooms were stored on high level shelving out of the reach of children.
- Materials and resources were maintained in a good state of repair.
- The kitchen was inaccessible to the preschool children.
- Leads and flexes were secure and inaccessible to the preschool children.
- The outdoor perimeter was secure with waste bins stored out of reach of children.
- Three highchairs were available for the younger children with the appropriate safety harness.

Infection Control:

- There was adequate handwashing facilities provided throughout the service with warm water, liquid soap and paper towels. Children were observed to wash hands prior to meals and snacks, after messy play and after using the toilet.

- Tables were observed to be cleaned prior to mealtimes and after messy play and snack times in all care rooms.
- The materials and resources throughout the service were visually clean, with cleaning schedules displayed and up to date in each care room.

Administration of Medication:

- No medication was observed to be administered on the day, however on discussion staff were very knowledgeable about medication administration and the support plans in place for children with prescribed medication.

Safe Sleep:

- Six standard cots were available in the cub's sleep room for those children under two years of age.
- Room temperatures were recorded as 20.9°C.
- Stackable floor beds were available for those preschool children over two years of age.
- Bed linen was observed to be visibly clean with a washing schedule in place for all linen.

Fire Safety:

- Emergency evacuation doors and routes remained clear of obstruction.
- Fire assembly notices were clearly displayed in the car park.
- Fire evacuation plans were displayed on the walls of each care room.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

- (1) The waste bins in the ladybirds and monkey rooms were not the required foot pedal operated bin which could pose a risk of infection control.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

In a written response the registered provider stated:

Infection Control:

- (1) Two new foot pedal operated bins were purchased. These bins will be checked regularly to ensure they are in working order

Supporting documentation submitted

- (1) Photographic evidence submitted.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions submitted by the Registered Provider adequately address the non-compliance found on inspection. This regulation is now compliant.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 25 - First aid

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a person trained in first aid for children is, at all times, immediately available to the children attending the pre-school service.

(2) A registered provider shall ensure that a suitably equipped first aid box for children-

(a) is safely stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position on the premises, and

(b) is available to the children attending the pre-school service at all times.

Compliance Information

(1) The registered provider ensured a person trained in first aid for children was available at all times to the children attending the preschool service. Seven adults had up to date certification of first aid for children.

(2) (a) (b)

First aid boxes are available in all the care rooms which are stocked sufficiently for the number of preschool children attending the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

A registered provider shall ensure that the pre-school service is adequately insured.

Compliance Information

The registered provider demonstrated adequate insurance with a certificate for a full day care service to cater for 82 children up until the 27th of March 2026.